

# MANUFACTURING EXTENSION PARTNERSHIP

## Success Stories from the Field

### Christian Brothers Inc

Minnesota Technology Inc.

#### Christian Brothers Scores Online Sales With Improved Web Site

##### Client Profile:

Christian Brothers, Inc., founded in 1964, manufactures hockey sticks and distributes them to a worldwide market. The company's 50 employees work from a 30,000 square foot facility located in Warroad, Minnesota. In August 2002, The Platinum Group acquired Christian Brothers.

##### Situation:

Christian Brothers wanted to tap into the power of the internet to increase sales. The company decided to develop a web site to sell a line of clothing (Christian Brothers' hockey sticks are sold through a national distributor network). The company also wanted to find out more about the import and export agreements between Canada and the United States. For assistance, Christian Brothers contacted Minnesota Technology, Inc. (MTI), a NIST MEP network affiliate.

##### Solution:

MTI provided an Internet Readiness service to help Christian Brothers expand its markets, improve business, and build the staff skills and infrastructure necessary to launch a web site.

MTI helped the company claim and register domain names, determine its target audience, develop a beta site for company preview, post the site to search engines, and train designated employees to maintain and update the site. MTI then assisted the company in developing marketing strategies for its internet site. That strategy helped the company create customer awareness through its presence at the St. Paul Hockey Expo.

In 2002, after debuting the site and collecting activity data, MTI reassessed the Christian Brothers site and suggested improvements to meet best practices and make better use of the internet by analyzing the site's search performance, link integrity, download speeds, navigation, registration, and graphic look.

MTI provided information on the Department of Commerce (DOC)'s export promotion services by bringing a DOC representative to the Christian Brothers facility to discuss ways of promoting the export of its products and to review the company's exporting history and current objectives.

To aid the company's investigation of new products and technologies, MTI performed a diagnostic assessment to identify its strengths and weaknesses, industry opportunities and threats, key success factors, sustainable competitive opportunities, and company performance improvement strategies.

# MANUFACTURING EXTENSION PARTNERSHIP

## Success Stories from the Field

### Results:

Launched the site with e-commerce capability in 1998.

Completed the online store in 1999 and began selling the clothing line directly via the internet.

Increased search engine capabilities in 2002.

Honed corporate online image to deliver concise, consistent messages to target markets.

Increased online sales.

Began promoting product exports.

### Testimonial:

"Working with Minnesota Technology, Inc. is great! Because of our mutual goal of maintaining and growing manufacturing in greater Minnesota, Christian Brothers is benefiting from Minnesota Technology, Inc.'s internet strategy expertise, their ability to introduce us to other state resources, such as the Minnesota Trade office, which is helping us weave our way through a multitude of import/export issues, and their ability to direct us toward manufacturing technology solutions we could not reach on our own. It is exciting to have Minnesota Technology, Inc. be part of our hockey team!"

Thomas G. Slaird, Chief Executive Officer